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# Nonverbal Communication in Business Interviewing and Negotiation

Dave Gustafson  
*Seton Hall University*

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**NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS  
INTERVIEWING AND NEGOTIATION**

**BY**

**DAVE GUSTAFSON**

**Thesis Advisor**

**Monsignor Dennis Mahon**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Arts in Corporate and Public Communication  
Seton Hall University**

**2002**

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Oral and written communications are the primary sources of communication in today's society. From our infancy, we begin to speak and write the very basics of our languages gradually mastering these skills through education. Some have mastered these skills to the point where they can transform their skills into novels, magazine and newspaper articles, annual reports, etc. Others have developed unique speaking abilities that aid them to become effective job interviewers, motivational speakers, and political and business leaders. In the corporate sector, it is the spoken and written word that is used to communicate business strategies, inform the public of stock trends and to advertise and market products to consumers. People in society use these communication techniques to read and write publications, participate in public hearings and send letters to friends and family.

Historically, our educational and corporate institutions have taught us to master these verbal communication skills. However, the communication skill that is used most often, but rarely, if not never, taught in grammar school, high school, or college is non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication, (often referred to as silent speech or body language) encompasses the qualities of speech such as tone of voice, speed, pitch and volume. Whether processing an electronic document for the government, or a handwritten memo to a business associate - the personality, education and demeanor of the author can sometimes be uncovered.

The intent of this research paper is to inform individuals who are involved in the interviewing and negotiating/bargaining processes, the opportunity to become more aware of and present, practical, non-verbal communication strategies. By applying the techniques outlined in this study, the reader will discover how to apply non-verbal communication to common corporate situations, as well as everyday life, and how to detect the non-verbal cues that are

transmitted from others.

First, the reader must understand why non-verbal communication is so important, which leads to the ultimate question of this study, which is how can non-verbal communication be applied to create successful business interviews and negotiations? Communication researchers Judee Burgoon, David Buller and W. Gill Wodall have developed the following reasons why non-verbal communication is important:

1. **Non-verbal communication is always present.** As long as two people can see each other, there is a high probability that they can gather information about each other.
2. **Non-verbal communication can lead to both understanding and misunderstanding.** Cultural, individual and contextual differences increase the chance of misinterpreting non-verbal signals.
3. **Non-verbal communication predated language in the development of the human species.** The general consensus among researchers indicates that non-verbal behavior developed prior to speech during human evolution. Stressful situations are more likely to bring out more "primitive" non-verbal behavior.
4. **Non-verbal communication can express what speech can't or shouldn't.** Certain messages may be inappropriate to express vocally or in writing. Non-verbal communication allows people to express themselves, while leaving them less accountable than if they could express themselves outright.
5. **Non-verbal communication is trusted.** Non-verbal communication is often considered more reliable than spoken communication. Research indicates that when non-verbal communication contradicts a spoken signal, people are more likely to believe nonverbal signals.

### Problem Statement

Can the proper understanding and use of non-verbal communication contribute to successful interviewing and negotiating? This question will be examined from applied research of recent studies of publications and by surveying those in corporate interviewing and negotiating environments.

### Subsidiary Questions

This study was initiated to develop awareness of non-verbal communication among the interviewing and negotiating public. It will also serve as vehicle that can help those individuals or organizations develop a strategy to apply and understand non-verbal communication.

1. How can individuals interpret the non-verbal signals of others?
2. How can individuals determine their non-verbal strengths and weaknesses?
3. What type(s) of programs or communication can organizations establish to bring awareness to non-verbal communication?

The techniques the author will present in this study, if applied, can assist the reader to:

- Interpret non-verbal cues of job candidates.
- Help determine if negotiations/bargaining will succeed.
- Assert ideas more powerfully.
- Persuade others to accept your point of view.
- Gain acceptance from others.
- Analyze others to develop your own nonverbal strategies.

Though the study of non-verbal communication may seem new, non verbal communication



"is a human process and the methods that men have intuitively used for hundreds of thousands of years to understand one another naturally" (Calero & Nierenberg, 1993, p. 4). Non-verbal communication predated language in the development of the human species. "There is general consensus that nonverbal communication developed prior to speech in the development of the human species. In times of high stress, humans may be more likely to express more 'primitive' nonverbal communication patterns" (<http://www.qontent.com/>). Non-verbal cues are both sent and received consciously and sub-consciously by sender and receiver. An example of a sub-conscious cue is the act of arm folding, which can be identified when an impatient customer waits for a table in a restaurant, or when a client folds the arms as an act of uncertainty and insecurity during a business negotiation. Conscious cues, or cues that can be translated into a word or meaning, are technically known as emblems. An example of an emblem in the United States is when a person wishes to indicate to another person from a distance that situation is "OK", they often will hold up their hand and touch their thumb and index finger together at the tips creating a circular shape while extending the other three fingers.

According to Lewis (1989), Albert Mehrabian (professor of Psychology at the University of California Los Angeles) has calculated that seven percent of communication comes from the spoken word; thirty eight percent from tone of voice and fifty five percent is from non-verbal (p. 13). According to Mehrabian's calculation, ninety three percent of communication is non-verbal. Lewis (1989) also states that Ray Birdwhistell estimates that on average, a person speaks from ten to eleven minutes per day and more than sixty five percent of communication between two individuals is through silent speech. This means that during job interviews and business negotiations, more than half of communication is transmitted non-verbally. (p. 13). According to Fast (1970), "the awareness of someone else's body language and the ability to interpret it, create an awareness of one's own body language" (p. 121). As one observes the signals transmitted

from others, we begin to analyze our own signals, and adjust to have better control of our own selves and function more effectively (p. 121).

### Definition of Terms

In this study, four areas of non-verbal communication will be presented.

1. Non-verbal communication: wordless exchange of communication involving facial and bodily gestures, eye contact, touch, and space relations (Givens, 2002).
2. Proxemics: the study of space and how it is used in different situations. This study will focus on interpersonal proxemics. Institutional proxemics, although directly associated with human space relations for this study, focuses on the actual physical work environment – office space and layout.
3. Kinesics: the study of non-verbal communication and bodily movement.
4. Haptics: the study of touch. The most important haptic movement within the interviewing and negotiating environment is the handshake.
5. Gestures: “A movement or position of the hand, arm, body, head, or face that is expressive of an idea, opinion, emotion, etc.” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 1993, p. 802).

### Need for the Study

Working in the corporate environment promotes many challenges to the people who support it. As an employee in the stereotypical corporate environment, the author has researched and observed non-verbal communication in order to present awareness to those engaged in corporate negotiating and interviewing. This gained knowledge can assist them in developing strategies in determining; who is the most confident job candidate, which sales

people are honest or deceiving, or how can one develop their own strategies on improving their nonverbal communication.

### Limitations to Researching and Applying Non-verbal Communication

When observing our audience's non-verbal communication, we can see similarities in gestures, movements and expressions. However, careful observation will dictate that discrepancies lie in the evaluation process. For instance, "a hand gesture in one society can be interpreted differently in another society. Our own global survival depends on our ability to interpret gestures from other societies" (Christensen, 1998). While observing another's non-verbal signals, it is possible to neglect certain non-verbal cues being sent at the same time. With so many non-verbal cues being sent simultaneously, it can be difficult to process for the observer. According to Birdwhistell (as cited by Fast, 1970, p. 118), "body language and spoken language are dependent on each other". If listening to only the spoken word, one may get the same distortion as if only body language was observed. The interpretations of non-verbal cues are sometimes true and sometimes not. The interpretations "are only true in the context of the entire behavior pattern of a person (Birdwhistell, as cited by Fast, 1970, p. 118). Since the interpretation is subconscious and based on the right side of the brain, which according to Lewis (1989), is responsible for interpreting visual elements (p. 14). It can be "difficult to put one's finger on exactly why one got a certain impression from someone, or event and put it into "left-brained" wording" (King, 1987), which is responsible for "demanding logical, deductive reasoning and the sort of technical wizardry which is so highly valued in the modern world" (Lewis, 1989, p. 14).

Interpreting isolated nonverbal communication can be difficult because signals can convey more than one meaning. A yawn can mean a lack of interest, or fatigue, or both. Rapid eye movement is commonly associated with deception, but can also mean a person may be

experiencing allergic reactions or problems with contact lenses

([http://www.acq.osd.mil/dp/cpf/pgv1\\_0/pgv5/pgv5c5.html](http://www.acq.osd.mil/dp/cpf/pgv1_0/pgv5/pgv5c5.html)).

Like the spoken word, non-verbal communication differs from culture to culture. Travelers, including business travelers, should tune down their gestures because it may be difficult to understand local cultures. In Thailand for example, it is considered rude to touch someone on the head or to expose the sole of the foot (Gregory, 2000). Other cautions to be aware of include:

- “Over generalizing about the nonverbal behavior of a culture can lead to the assumption that everybody in the culture behaves in the same way”

(<http://www.siu.edu/~ekachai/nonberbal.html>).

- Many nonverbal behaviors are done infrequently and should not be used alone to characterize a culture.

- Nonverbal communication is learned behavior and passed down from one generation to another.

- Understanding nonverbal patterns of one culture can help us understand our own ethnocentric attitudes (<http://www.siu.edu/~ekachai/nonberbal.html>).

According to an anonymous writer at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, non-verbal communication

- “Complements what was said verbally.
- Contradicts what was said verbally.
- Substitutes for what would be said verbally.
- Regulates and manages the communication event.”

(<http://www.siu.edu/~ekachai/nonberbal.html>).

Those who engage in interviewing and negotiating must also take into consideration that some professionals are trained in interpreting the non-verbal signals of others and can consciously

control their own signals to deceive others.

#### Statement of the Research Question

Can the proper understanding and use of non-verbal communication contribute to successful interviewing and negotiating? This question will be examined by recent studies of publications and by surveying those in corporate interviewing and negotiating environments.

## Chapter II

### OVERVIEW

The author of this study has discovered that there is a vast library of research dedicated to non-verbal communication. Throughout the author's education and business experience, it is to his conclusion, that non-verbal communication is not taught enough, or not at all, by educators and business people. By far, writing and speaking are the most taught and understood means of communication. Particularly, corporate America needs to train their workforce to be able to apply and interpret non-verbal communication, which will help create more effective interview and negotiation encounters.

The topic of non-verbal communication first became an interest of the author dating back roughly to the mid 1990's, a few years before considering becoming a graduate student. The author discovered a book written by David Lewis in 1989 titled *The Secret Language of Success: Using Body Language to Get What You Want*. This work will be referenced most in this author's study, because of the variety of topics covered, accompanied by tables, photographs and illustrations supporting the material. The material is written in easy to understand, sometimes amusing language. Lewis analyzes this form of communication and how it is applied in business, as well as social activities, and how one can apply these strategies to their advantage. This work is recommended by this author for individuals interested in the field of non-verbal communication. The author has used several of the strategies outlined by Lewis in everyday business and social situations.

The author also used the Internet as key research tool for this study. A non-profit research organization called the Center for Nonverbal Studies, which focuses on all forms of communication, provides the website, <http://members.aol.com/nonverbal2/>. This site, like David Lewis' work, provides in-depth definitions, background, researchers, photographs and diagrams

relating to the study of non-verbal communication. The center analyzes information from the viewpoints of Anthropology, Art, Biology, Evolution and Neuroscience.

Throughout this research process, the author has discovered that several authors whose work was referred to, have cited each other in their work. David Lewis refers to Julius Fast's 1970 *Body Language: The Essential Secrets of Non-Verbal Communication*. Edward T. Hall's 1966 *The Hidden Dimension*, and Ray Birdwhistell's 1970 *Kinesics and Context*. Each author, who had performed extensive research in the area of non-verbal communication, was a key influence in Lewis' recent research.

## Chapter III

### CURRENT RESEARCH IN NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

#### a. Proxemics

This chapter of the study will discuss the areas of nonverbal communication that have been researched for the better part of the last fifty years. The first topic of discussion regarding nonverbal communication is the study of spatial relationships or proxemics – the appreciation and use of space in using silent speech signals (Givens, 2002). Every person, of every age, establishes a comfort zone or space bubble, where we prefer to keep others during encounters. This comfort zone is constantly increasing and decreasing, depending on the relationship with a particular individual(s). This zone is designed as a cushion that contracts as we correspond with people we are intimate with and trust, while the bubble increases as we are confronted with individuals who we are threatened by or do not trust (Lewis, 1989, pp. 94-95). “Research supports the hypothesis that the violation of this personal space can have serious adverse effects on communication” (Givens, 2002).

With so many different forms of communication and transportation now available to the corporate world, many cultures are required to meet and communicate in environments unlike the one's they are familiar with. When business people travel outside their own country, he or she must be aware of space limitations, or proxemics, established by the native culture.

There are several laws of proxemics that must be understood before one can use the space given to them and to others in various situations. In 1959, Northwestern University anthropologist, Edward T. Hall, coined the word proxemics, in his 1965 book *The Silent Language*, which focused on human spatial relationships (Givens, 2002). In his book, Hall identified four human bodily distances:

- 0-8 inches - intimate space.



- 1.5 to 4 feet - personal/casual space.
- 5 to 10 feet - social/consultative space.
- Beyond 10 feet - public space (Givens, 1999-2000).

In a separate study, Vruugt and Kerkstra (as cited by Givens, 2002) summarized that "in interaction between strangers, the interpersonal distance between women is smaller than between men and women" (Givens, 2002). According to Lewis (1989), women tend to feel less threatened when same-sex strangers invade their close personal space. This reaction may reach back to a woman's childhood, where they are brought up to be less fearful of physical intimacy than boys (p. 106). Women should take precaution when entering a man's social/space during a job interview or business engagement because a man could interpret this as a possible opportunity for flirtation (Fast, 1970, p. 59). However, men usually respond strongly and negatively when a man invades the same personal space. Lewis (1989) states that evidence suggests, when a person is in process of invading another's personal space, the distance at which the approaching person halted is based on six subconscious factors:

1. How well the two parties know each other. The warmer the relationship, the closer the two parties will stand.
2. Age. People under thirty tend to stand closer to one another than older people. When a younger person is talking to somebody significantly older, a greater distance is usually preferred.
3. Nationality and ethnic background.
4. The friendlier the meeting, the closer physically and emotionally the two people will stand.
5. Personality. Introverts tend to stand further away between themselves and others, than extroverts.

6. Whether you live in the country or city. People, who work in a city, prefer to work at closer distances than people in the country (p. 94).

#### b. Corporate Proxemics

Understanding and using proxemics is crucial to establishing successful business relationships. While personal space accompanies the individual, territoriality is relatively stationary. The amount of space a worker is given is usually an indication of hierarchy. The larger the work area, the level of hierarchy increases. "In any major organizations, being given a larger working area is as sure a sign of favour as losing space – by being moved to a smaller office or having one's office portioned to provide a bigger office for another executive – is an indication of disfavour" (Lewis, 1989, p. 181). Another example of proxemic relations is the stepping behind the desk of an individual. The office desk is a primary object in establishing personal space in the office and is positioned to one's desire. In this author's own experience, approaching visitors halt advancement at the entrance of the cubicle rather than enter. The chair is almost always placed on the adjacent side of the desk from the occupant permitting the desk to act as a barrier between visitor and occupant. Rarely is the visitor's chair placed on the same side as the occupants. There are three basic arrangements for the position of an office desk:

- Occupant faces window with back toward the door (Lewis, 1989, p. 195).
- Occupants places desk caddy corner and is protected from intrusion on all sides (Givens, 2002).
- Occupant allows invasion of space at front and one side of desk (Givens, 2002). The reader can interpret variations of these arrangements.

It can be advantageous to an interviewee or individual visiting a client for a negotiation to have the ability to determine the personality of the person by observing the positing of the

individual in their office. In a study of 132 offices, Duncan Joiner identified that most occupants of offices positioned their desks so that they faced the doorway and the window while maintaining private and public zones.

“Being able to see the door from one’s working position implies a readiness for interaction, and the fact that a large proportion of the sample adopted this kind of seating position suggests that to be able to see who is coming into the room, and to be instantly prepared for them— that is, to have one’s front correctly displayed – is possibly more important than being able to glance out of the window.” (Joiner, as cited by Lewis, 1989, p. 196).

Superiors, to a degree, are able to violate the private space, personal space and workspace of their subordinates. Superiors usually deny this violation. A superior may also, without warning, place a hand on the shoulder of a subordinate, another move that would be poorly appreciated if initiated by someone of lower status (Lewis, 1989, p. 184). In most cases, a subordinate must wait outside the supervisor’s office until permission to enter is granted. When approaching a supervisor, and he or she is on the telephone, the subordinate may turn and walk away, and return at a later time. If the subordinate is on the phone, the supervisor will usually assert his status by standing above or near the subordinate, and wait until the subordinate gives the person on the opposite end of the call a notion to call back, and then gives the supervisor full attention (Fast, 1970, p. 48), and throws the subordinate off balance (Fast, 1970, p. 53).

The more privacy an individual enjoys, the higher the status. Executives generally position secretaries or receptionists outside the private office to halt the advancement of unwanted or unexpected visitors. Junior managers and workers are forced to share general office space, which is accompanied with noise and lack of privacy (Lewis, 1989, p. 184). An experiment indicated by Fast (1970), where students watched silent movies of actors playing the roles of an

executive at his desk and an invading visitor. The students ranked the status of the visitor by certain permissions by the executive. The students determined the visitor had the least amount of status when halting advancement just inside the opening of the office door. The visitor had more status when walking into the center of the room, and higher status when walking up to the executive's desk, directly opposite of the seated executive. Also indicated was the time measured between the time the visitor knocked on the door and when the seated executive heard the knock and granted permission to enter. The quicker the visitor entered, the more status they had. The longer it took the executive took to answer the knock, the more status he/she had. How far the visitor is allowed to enter the executive's office and how long it takes to be granted permission to enter the territory, announces the visitor's status (Fast, 1970, p. 48).

### c. Space Domination and Leadership

Invading, dominating and the opening of territory are crucial actions that affect the outcomes of negotiations and interviews. The amount of personal space given to clients and interviewees can lead to a successful or unsuccessful interview or negotiation. "When a man's territorial defenses are weakened or intruded upon, his self-assurance tends to grow weaker" (Fast, 1970, p. 52). Beginning with the physical being, the taller an individual is, the more space they occupy and more dominant they are is a truism that works in the animal kingdom all the way up to man. In the animal kingdom, the leader of the wolf pack can assert his dominance over a yearling (or subordinate) to the ground, standing over him. The subordinate demonstrates their subservience by crawling beneath the pack leader (Fast, 1970, p.50). Tall men have a natural advantage when it comes to status, because they occupy more space and perceived as being more powerful and dominant (Lewis, 1989, p.181). Between 1900 and 1968 the victorious United States presidential candidate was *always* taller than the runner up. This affect is less powerful with taller women

because both sexes view taller women as unfeminine and somewhat more threatening. Height domination and power originated back in childhood, when taller parents and grown-ups have absolute authority over us (Lewis, 1989, p. 182). A lack of height does not mean an individual cannot achieve status. The mere perception of status adds height to an individual. Lewis (1989), sites an experiment presented to undergraduate students, where a speaker was introduced in five different ways: a university student, a demonstrator in psychology, a lecturer in psychology, a senior lecturer in psychology and a professor of psychology at Cambridge University. At the end of the lecture, students were asked to estimate the speaker's height. As the status of lecturer grew, so did his estimated height. The professor averaged five inches taller than the student (Lewis, 1989, p. 182). The result of this action is who is higher. Whenever dominance or superiority is to be communicated, elevating yourself while you're seated with someone else, or having them sit while you're both standing, the seated person will get an immediate signal, without even understanding non-verbal communication, that you are "talking down to them". If you are the seated person, and have accepted the other person before he or she stands up, they will get the impression that you have accepted their dominance (Nierenberg and Calero, 1993, p. 97). Calero and Nierenberg (1993) urge executives not to elevate themselves and to remove physical barriers and to get close to those who disagree with them (p. 97). In certain instances, you may elect to violate a co-worker's private domain. When intruding on someone's space, you may immediately pass a document over the desk. Then ask to point out items in the document by positioning yourself in the personal zone of the occupant. This move will create tension in the occupant, giving you a psychological advantage (Lewis, 1989, p 196). Counter action is critical if the space invasion is to be rebuffed. If someone invades your private space, do not retreat. "It's the equivalent of a military retreat" (Lewis, 1989, p. 197). Instead take proactive measures. Ensure office chairs are heavy and difficult to reposition and place items such as a

wastebasket or furniture, such as a small table, near the sides of the desk to create a wider barrier against intrusion.

There are several other tactics you can employ to dominate space. By leaning back in your chair and placing your feet on your table and your hands behind your head, you occupy even more space, conveying that you are in control of the situation.

You can also display dominance as you walk down hallways. By walking in the center of the hallway, you are sending a message to others that you intend to dominate the hall space forcing others to walk to the sides of the hallway.

#### d. The Meeting Room

The corporate meeting is the opportunity for co-workers, customers and business partners to express ideas, products, services and many other issues. In the seated position, most people become relatively the same height, which neutralizes advantages and intimidation of physical height. Legs are kept hidden under the table and do not compete with the movement of eyes, heads or hands (Givens, 2002). If you decide to make a key point during a meeting, lean forward with the palms of the hands facedown. (Leaning back with palms up, portrays a lack of conviction). Artifacts such as bracelets, watches and cuffs add visibility to your hand gestures. To establish further control of your space at the conference table, place notebooks, documents, pens, or any object your brought with you and position over the largest area possible without invading another person's (territorial) bubble (Bixler, as cited by Givens, 2002). The dominant or key speaker of the meeting will usually occupy a central seat, either at the center, as the "President of the United States always sits at the center of the conference table during Cabinet meetings" ([http://www.acq.osd.mil/dp/cpf/pgv1\\_0/pgv5/pgv5c5.html](http://www.acq.osd.mil/dp/cpf/pgv1_0/pgv5/pgv5c5.html)) or end of the table, which is less effective strategy because at a large negotiating table, the occupants sitting furthest from

the speaker experience greater difficulty in exchanging notes, giving cues or whispering to the key speaker ([http://achttp://www.acq.osd.mil/dp/cpf/pgv1\\_0/pgv5/pgv5c5.htmlq.osd.mil](http://achttp://www.acq.osd.mil/dp/cpf/pgv1_0/pgv5/pgv5c5.htmlq.osd.mil)). A competent speaker will sustain a moderate tone of voice, fluid gestures and maintain eye contact. The audience will respond negatively to a speaker who uses a high tone of voice, displays muscle tension, a stiff posture and pointing (Driskell and Salas, as cited by Givens, 2002).

#### e. Cultural Proxemics

The four personal zones explained earlier in this chapter are the primary distances established in the United States. When American people, including business people, are required to travel to other nations, they suffer what Hall (1959) describes as "culture shock" which he defined as "simply a removal or distortion of many of the familiar cues one encounters at home and the substitution for them of other cues which are strange" (p. 174). Some of the side effects of culture shock include; cross cultural break-downs in communications and misunderstandings, increased prejudices, hostility and intolerances to the host culture (Craig, 1993, p. 235). With the increasing number of corporations expanding globally, the need for associates to travel abroad is critical for success. It is crucial for those interviewing or negotiating individuals from outside the United States. In Arabian cultures, a close personal zone measures, on the average, eighteen to thirty six inches. If an American business person (whose close personal zone measures four feet or more) interacts with an Arabian or Japanese native at their close personal zone, the American can often feel an uncomfortable intimacy from this encounter because what the American considers intimate space, the Arabian and Japanese person may consider social space. Some American firms have trained their staff to behave in a relaxing and friendly manner when their personal space is violated in these situations. The Japanese have been known to have personal zones of twelve inches or less. Researchers have observed American and Japanese acquaintances in the same room. As a result of these encounters, researchers observed the

Japanese person continuously tried to invade beyond the American's personal zone, while the American tried to retreat to their comfort zone. This action was dubiously termed the cocktail party two-step (Lewis, 1989, p. 106).

The following chart lists the culture/country and the distances preferred when two people are making an initial encounter (Lewis, 1989, p. 108):

Preferred Distance	Nationality/Country
Close	Japanese Greeks Black North Americans and Hispanics Italians French South Americans Spaniards Arabs Greeks
Moderate	British Swedish Germans Austrians Swiss
Far	White North Americans Australians New Zealanders

Business people can benefit from applying these distances to their multi-cultural, business engagements.



## The Advantages of Using Proper Gestures in Corporate Environments

### a. Eye Contact

If vision is the most important sense, then it is no wonder that eye contact is one of, if not, the most important nonverbal communication strategies. Eye contact is so important in establishing rapport with friends and business associates because a certain look can actually make or break an engagement. Before the importance of eye contact during negotiations is presented, the understanding of the physiology of the eye and its movements will assist the reader in using proper eye contact in the appropriate situation and how to interpret the eye contact and movements of others.

A oft-repeated phrase is, "The eyes are the window of the soul". Current research will suggest this statement more true than fancy. The movements and conditions of the eyes can reveal so much of a person's thoughts, which can be advantageous to an interviewer or interviewee, or sales people negotiating a business deal.

According to Bittleston, there are five crucial times in business to make eye contact:

1. When you meet someone for the first time. Initial eye contact will establish a preliminary relationship. It will tell you something about the person you are about to deal with. When eye contact is accompanied with a smile the encounter has even a greater chance for success.
2. Eye contact during negotiations can shift opponents to your side.
3. When terminating an employee. Enhances sympathy towards the action.
4. When congratulating someone on achievements.
5. When you say goodbye to someone. It will be the person's last memory of you.

All face-to-face encounters begin at a distance and the non-verbal cues usually involved are movements of the eyes and mouth. When two parties are at communicating distance, ranging

from six to twelve feet, the first signal given is the eyebrow flash, which is noted as when the eyebrows rise up and then back down for approximately one fifth of a second. People who are on good terms or are in agreement with each other use the movement generally. People who are on bad terms do not initiate this movement. Individuals who disapprove of each other, sometimes initiate the eyebrow flash in conjunction with the tilting of the head backwards, lowering the eyelids and protruding the chin (Lewis, 1989, p. 73).

The eyebrow flash is performed sub-consciously and few people are aware of the movement. However, since the movement is recognized below conscious level, failure to return and eyebrow flash when it is expected, can lead to unease and a negative appraisal (Lewis, 1989, p. 75).

Michael Argyle (as cited by Nuremberg & Calero, 1993, p. 24) observed through research that, "People look at each other thirty to sixty percent of the time", and when people are exchanging eye contact more than sixty percent of time, they are more interested in the other person, than what they are talking about. Calero and Nierenberg (1993) have also indicated that people give more eye contact when they listen than when they speak. When asked a question that makes them uncomfortable, defensive, or irritable, their eye contact dramatically increases (p. 25).

#### b. Effective Application of Eye Contact in Interviews and Negotiations

A study was conducted by Dr. Gerhard Nielson (Medley, 1993), involved the filming of interviewees and where they looked. The study showed that there was very little eye contact between the interviewer and interviewee. The study found that when people are listening they look; when they speak, they tend to maintain eye contact. It is commonly brought to the attention of interviewees that they should look the interviewer. This is in contrary to the natural action of

looking away while speaking. Being an abnormal gesture, this can strike the interviewer negatively. "Interviewees tend to look away just before or just after the beginning of one-quarter of their statements. Fifty percent of the interviewees look at the interviewer as they finish speaking" (Medley, 1993, pp. 64- 65). The interviewee should not be concerned with looking at the interviewer in the eye. The encounter should be treated as a conversation and for both parties to act naturally (Medley, 1993, p. 65). According to Fast (1970) (as cited by Medley, 1993, pp. 65-66), when a person looks away while speaking, the person should not be interrupted. When looking at someone while speaking, the person is sending a signal to be interrupted when pausing. A pause without eye contact means the person is not finished speaking. If a listener looks away from the speaker, it indicates the listener is dissatisfied with what is being said, or the listener is trying to conceal the reaction to the speaker's words. When a person looks away while speaking, it may be interpreted as the speaker's uncertainty to what is being said. When a listener looks at a speaker, it is a signal of agreement, and if a speaker looks at a listener, it can be a signal of confidence in the speaker. These actions will result in distributing subconscious negative or positive reactions between listener and speaker (Medley, 1993, p. 66). Lewis (1989) states that if an employer gives you frequent eye contact during an interview, there is a very good chance you may receive an offer for employment. When gaze is delivered accompanied with frequent smiling and head movements, the job offer is almost guaranteed. (p. 141). Forbes and Jackson (as cited by Lewis, 1989, p. 141-2) concluded that successful candidates received twice as much direct eye contact, three times more smiling and twice as much head-nodding as unsuccessful candidates. Medley (1993) states that although eye contact is important, both parties should be most concerned with acting naturally. As in many of the nonverbal communication activities that will be covered in this study, eye contact rules and theories should not be labeled for everyone. "Most people look away while speaking, and it's unrealistic to think

that they are all doing so because of uncertainty. They look away because that's the way most people naturally speak! (pp. 66-67).

#### b. Effective Use of Gaze in Business and Formal Encounters

According to Lewis (1989), there are three aspects of establishing proper eye contact: How long to gaze, when to gaze and where to gaze. Maintaining proper gaze in a business encounter is slightly different than in social situation. In a business encounter, gaze should be fixated on the eyes down to the bridge of the nose. Fixating the gaze in this area conveys interest and self-confidence. For personal encounters, shift the gaze downward to take in the nose, lips and chin. In a formal setting, male counterparts should maintain eye-contact between sixty and seventy percent of the time. Eye contact made at a less duration can be interpreted as uneasy or lack of confidence. Anything longer can be interpreted as aggressive. When there are male-female counterparts, eye contact from the female should be reduced to fifty percent if the impression of a submissive or compliant attitude is wished. A woman who wishes to maintain an assertive attitude should raise her eye contact to seventy percent. However, women should be aware that this level assertiveness could be disturbing and stressful to a man. Female counterparts should maintain eye contact for seventy percent of the encounter longer gaze as a threat or sexual invitation. Females who are not used to aggressive females or lack sexual confidence, can interpret the longer gaze as a threat or sexual invitation especially if the gaze shifts lower on the face (Lewis, 1989, p. 140). Gaze should be fixated when another party *begins* talking. This communicates and subconsciously flatters the other party that what they are saying is of interest to you. Breaks in gaze are applied when the other party breaks speaking. Begin the gaze when speaking using momentary pauses to break gaze. When finished speaking, break gaze downward to signal to the other party to deliver a response. While using appropriate gaze, other parties "will

believe you like them and the more liking they will show you in return (Lewis, 1989, p. 141).

When delivering a presentation to a large group of people, it is important to maintain gaze with the entire group so each individual feels they are important to the presentation. If possible, do not read from a script; either memorize or use brief notes (Lewis, 1989, p. 141).

The gazing rules previously mentioned apply to North Americans, but according to Michael Argyle (as cited by Lewis, 1989, p. 141), "Too much gaze was regarded as superior, disrespectful, threatening, or insulting by Africans, Asians and Indians. Too little gaze was interpreted as not paying attention and impolite, especially by Arabs and South Americans". Asians, Indians, Pakistanis and North Europeans also prefer shorter gazes. When dealing with the Japanese, avoid gazing at the face, and shift gaze towards the neck.

#### Kinetic Effects on Interviews and Negotiations

In corporate environments, individuals must communicate effectively to successfully compete in today's competitive market place. As stated earlier, corporate strategies are presented in written and spoken languages. However, when we are not communicating with others using these techniques, we are constantly communicating by means of kinesics, or body movements. Kinesics, identified by anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell in 1952, involves facial gestures, body movements and facial expressions. Having the ability to interpret one's kinetic communication, as well as developing a conscious understanding of self-kinetic and what signals they send out, is critical to understanding their thoughts and emotions.

There are several areas of the body that are involved in non-verbal communication and each body part and movement needs to be understood to create a positive impression for oneself and to interpret others.

##### a. Hand Gestures

Movements of the body can enhance or disrupt communication during meetings and

interviews. First, emblems are body movements that translate directly into spoken words. In the United States, the index finger held up with a closed fist can refer to the word, or amount of the number "1", or the raising or dropping of the shoulders can indicate uncertainty. The number of emblems varies greatly from culture to culture. In the United States, there are approximately one hundred emblems in use, while in Israel, students use more than two hundred fifty, which is said to be the most (Lewis, 1989, p. 21). Knowledge of emblems can assist you to avoid inadvertently sending the wrong message. If you are involved with an associate or client from the Middle East, it is vital to understand the shaking of the head from side to side indicates, "Yes", (Lewis, 1989, p. 22), where as in the United States, the same movement indicates, "No". Emblems are also made subconsciously. Lewis (1989), notes researcher, Peter Eckman, observed a woman involved with a stressful job interview with her employer. Without verbally expressing her dislike for the interviewer, the woman subconsciously displayed her true feelings. The woman extended her middle finger, along the arm of her chair for several minutes, which is a sign of disrespect in the United States (p. 23)

#### b. Illustrators

Illustrators are defined by David Lewis (1989), as, "Any sort of body movement which plays a role in verbal communication" (p. 23). Illustrators are linked directly to speech, and are used to emphasize words, phrases, drawing pictures or impose a rhythm on the spoken word. The variety of illustrators varies greatly among nationalities. Countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, such as Italy, consider the illustrator vital to conversation (Lewis, 1989, p. 23-25).

The use of Illustrators can have positive and negative results during business and social encounters. Researcher, William Condon (as cited by Lewis, 1989, p. 25), analyzed through slow

motion film, that all humans show a distinct correlation between speech and bodily movements. The lack of using Illustrators has the potential of creating a dull and monotone dialogue. While the extensive use of Illustrators can distract one's rhythm of speech, making. Conversations (interviews/meetings) with these individuals can be tiring and irritating (Lewis, 1989, p. 25).

Sometimes, the Illustrators used by one person, in conjunction with other non-verbal signals, will mirror those used by the other party. Mirroring is when individuals demonstrate similar expressions and movements, which help establish rapport. Lewis (1989) has discovered a fifty percent agreement rate during negotiations when parties have used the mirroring gesture (pp. 150-151). Flora Davis (as cited by Lewis, 1989, p. 25) noted in her work, Inside Intuition, when observing films made by Condon, that when a interviewer and a candidate were engaging in successful rapport, they leaned forward and backward in their chairs and raised their heads at the same time. "Mirroring indicates maximum communication with the other person. The messages and the words of the sale are being received and accepted by the other" (Gabriel, 2002). "Tracking" is a mirroring technique that can be used to gain a more positive attitude during a sale. A person can mirror the movements and posture of the opposing party while gradually moving the party toward a more positive posture and psychological openness. As the opposition maneuvers their posture, to mimic the initiator, their attitudes will shift also. This is an appropriate time to close the sale (Gabriel, 2002).

"When Illustrators are out of sync, one or both parties will find the exchange stressful and unpleasant, although they will be unable to explain quite what is going wrong" (Lewis, 1989, p. 25). Individuals involved in interviews or negotiations can use excessive Illustrators to stress the opposing party (s), or use it generously to take command of the situation.

### c. Regulators

When individuals are conversing, regulators serve as indicators that signal to speakers when

starting or ending an exchange. Regulators, which Lewis (1989), describes as "turn-taking signals" (p. 26). Regulators play an important role when trying to make a good impression. One of the more frequently used regulators is the head nod. Fast head nods are used to alert the speaker to finish their point of view, while a slower nod indicates the speaker to continue. Mark Knapp (as cited by Lewis, 1989 p. 26), states that when there is effective turn taking, it is a sign there is good rapport between parties; when there is ineffective turn taking, the impressions that are made are rude, disruptive or frustrating.

When yielding a turn, the person speaking will drop his or her voice, slow the tempo of his or her speech and can even drawl the last syllable of the last word, but may glance down, lower the eyes, head or both. The use of Illustrators will then decrease. The listener is given eye contact as the signal to begin speaking. If the other party fails to respond to these signals, the speaker can raise an eyebrow, or slightly touch the individual. To disrupt another party, you may raise your index finger, which is an attempt from a listener to disrupt a speaker. This may be a throwback to childhood, when the child in a classroom takes a breath and holds up the hand to be called on. If you are speaking, and the opposing party raises the index finger, you can lightly touch the individual's arm to convey you wish to continue your point of view. If your intention is to deny the listener any chance of responding, the action is to avoid eye contact (Lewis, 1989, pp. 27-28).

#### d. Adaptors

Adaptors are "movements, gestures and other actions used to manage our feelings or control our responses" (Lewis, 1989, p. 29). These motions can be identified in stressful situations in business meetings and negotiations. Individuals who are uncomfortable or stressed at a meeting will sometimes rub their neck gently. Often, stressed individuals will use the head grooming motion to signal conflict and uncertainty. The motion can be observed with a downward motion



of the hand swiping the back of the head. This is a signal of doubt and conflict (Lewis, 1989, p. 30-32).

When exuding confidence, people will sometimes use what Birdwhistell (as cited by Calero and Nierenberg, 1993, pp. 40-41.) identified as steeping, (see Figure Example 3.1), which is a joining of the tips of the fingers, in the form of a church steeple. It suggests the person is very sure and confident of what they are saying. There are two basic types of steeping, covert and open. Primarily, women in the seated position use covert or low steeping, while the fingers are steeped at waist level. Research conducted by Calero and Nierenberg indicates, "the more important an executive feels he is, the higher he will hold his hands while steeping" (p. 92).

(Figure Example 3.1)



Sometimes, the person will raise the steeple to the point where they can look at the other person through the steeple (p. 92). Calero and Nierenberg (1993) have observed negotiators subconsciously using the steeping gesture in an act of defense when cornered in a weak bargaining position. When the opposition recognized this move, they felt the person using the steeping gesture was withholding information. The opposition would then change tactics. (p. 92). Calero and Nierenberg (1993) also observed another form of steeping when both hands are held behind the back with the chin thrust forward. This position was identified in a Japanese executive discussing a marketing plan to their firm. It is a signal from the individual of sheer dominance and confidence (p. 94)

Similar to steeping, Calero and Nierenberg (1993), observed videotapes of a negotiation in which an individual begins to bring the hands closer together, with the arms in the position of basic steeping gestures, was another sign of confidence (p. 93).

#### e. Palm Up and Palm Down Hand Gestures

In circumstances when individuals display the palm up gesture (see Figure Example 3.2), one should take notice the true message behind it. According to Givens (2002), “uplifted palms suggest a vulnerable or nonaggresssive pose which appeals to listeners as allies, rather than as rivals or foes” (p. 2).

(Figure Example 3.2)



(<http://members.aol.com/nonverbal2/palmup.htm#PALM-UP>).

When this gesture is displayed at a conference table, “The palm-up cue may, like an olive branch, enlist support as an emblem of peace” (Givens, 2002). The palm-up gesture can vary in other cultures. According to Morris (as Cited by Givens, 2002), “In North-Africa, cradling one hand in the other with both in the palm-up position, means, ‘I don’t understand’”. The gesture can be an appeal to the staff of a CEO in a boardroom who imploring, “I need your help”. (Givens, 2002).

In contrast to the palm-up gesture, is the palm-down, which is used during speaking and listening situations when the hands and fingers are extended in the downward position. The

gesture is interpreted as a stronger, more assertive move than the palm down. The palm down (see Figure Example 3.3) is, "Highly visible above a conference table where it is raised and lowered like a judge's gavel" (Givens, 2002). The palm down also is used to create the table slap. During a meeting, one should be aware when a teammate or opposing party uses the palm down for the table slap. The signals that are made are to call attention to a key point, object to another party's point, demonstrate anger or call attention to one's presence (Givens, 2002).

(Figure Example 3.3)



(<http://members.aol.com/nonverbal2/palmdown.htm#PALM-DOWN>)

The palm-up and palm-down gestures also communicate signals during handshaking, which will be discussed later in this study.

#### f. Hand Rubbing

Calero and Nierenberg (1993), observed the gesture of hand rubbing during videotaped negotiations. Their observation uncovered that individuals used this gesture when, unless their hands are exposed to cold elements, they are very interested in the activity. They also discovered hand rubbing is demonstrated when nervous individuals experience sweaty palms. Women typically wipe sweat on a tissue or handkerchief, while men use their trousers to absorb the moisture on the hands (p. 129).

## Posture

Proper posture is another area of non-verbal communication crucial to positive performance in interviews and negotiations, as well as personal health. There are several postures used by both men and women, in every business situation. Each posture, along with other non-verbal signals, transmits signals of confidence, stress, uncertainty and unwillingness.

According to Lewis (1989), "The message sent out by poor posture is generally a negative one. By reducing your overall height, you diminish your stature physically and psychologically. Standing and moving correctly adds a least an inch to your height" (p. 59). By standing or sitting in a straight, upright position, a person transmits a signal of confidence to themselves and others. "A proud, erect stance, often seen in the man who has accomplished much and knows where he is going, is also a clear indication of confidence" (Calero and Nierenberg, 1993, p. 90).

Interviewing and negotiating are clear examples where posture plays an important role in communication. To create a favorable impression at a job interview, the interviewee should approach the interviewer with a straight posture, square shoulders, erect shoulders and fast steps. A person who approaches with slumped shoulders, heavy steps and head down gives the impression of dejection and depression (Goswami, 2001). The initial greeting should be met with the exchange of a handshake, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Interviewers can interpret inner feelings and confidence level of their interviewees by examining the interviewee's posture. While in the seated position, if a candidate demonstrates locked ankles and clenched hands, the gesture indicates holding back (Calero and Nierenberg, 1993, pp. 112-113). In a negotiation, the signal indicates holding back a counteroffer (Meade, 2002). The male version of the locked ankles is demonstrated in the illustration below:

(Figure Example 3.4)



(Calero and Nierenberg, 1995, p. 112)

Women perform a slightly different version of the locked ankles. One leg tends to remain straight, while the other ankle hooks behind it (Calero and Nierenberg, 1995, p. 115).

### Barriers

Men and women often display defensive postures called barriers. A barrier can be easily recognized when a person crosses their arms or legs, in an act of a defensive attitude. The most common barrier used is the standard arm fold. According to Lewis (1989), if the negotiator is aware of this gesture during a presentation, it is time to change tactics (p. 171).

Negotiators, interviewers and interviewees should be aware of the variations of the arm and leg fold. Each conveys a different message. Arms folded with clinched fists underneath folded arms, is an indication of aggressiveness. The arm clasp is recognized when hands clasp the upper arm while crossed. This can represent either extreme anxiety or great anger. During business encounters, it is crucial to break the tension. Lewis (1989) recommends offering the anxious client refreshment, a document, or writing utensil (p. 172). Leg barriers are also commonly used. Sometimes, leg crossing is used to comfort a person sitting. However, if other barriers such as arm folding accompany this posture, the negotiator should change strategies. When an individual is sitting with a leg cross, while holding the crossed leg with both hands, it is

recognized as an extreme defensive and negative position. Lewis (1989) also provides methods to counter act this tension. He recommends to, "Never appear submissive at a first meeting, never to betray a weakness and always act with assurance and disguise requests for favors as mutually beneficial opportunities" (p. 186). The person should move calmly and smoothly with confidence.

Boredom (see Figure Example 3.6) can be an easy identifiable cue by an individual in a negotiating setting. Calero and Nierenberg (1995), illustrate boredom when the individual's head rests in the palm of the hand and drooping of the eyes (pp. 118-119).

(Figure Example 3.6)



(<http://www.basicsciencetology.net/page05.htm>)

### The Importance of Haptics as Non-Verbal Communication

Haptics, as stated earlier in this study, is the study of touch. Throughout the corporate environment, the most acceptable form of touch is demonstrated by the handshake. There are several variances of the handshake, and each conveys a different message. By understanding the types of handshakes, the reader can determine if the other person is "sincere or insincere, dominant or submissive, deceitful" (Brown). Understanding how to interpret the meaning behind a specific handshake can help you understand how to shake hands properly. The proper

handshake is crucial to the success of an interview or negotiation. Robert E. Brown, has itemized the handshaking process into four stages:

1. Engage: When the web on the hand between the thumb and the index finger touch the other person's. Hand should be flat enough to touch the other person's. The position allows you to give and receive messages.
  2. Pause: The key stage of a successful handshake. Performed at the natural conclusion of a handshake. Displays sincerity and openness. Key is to be the last person to release the handshake. When pausing, the hand should be held at an angle, while cupping the last two fingers under slightly firmly enough to support the other person's palm. This will allow the person who pauses longer, to interpret information the other party sends during the conclusion of the handshake.
  3. Observation: Determine what kind of handshake you received; Firm or weak, moist or dry, or moist, pushing, pulling or twisting, warm or cold. Remember what message you received from the other person, and when to use it later.
  4. Remember: After the engagement, remember what type of handshake was given.
- Compare opening and closing handshakes.

A handshake alone will not determine the personality of an individual. The handshake must be interpreted in conjunction with eye contact, posture and facial gestures.

Both Lewis (1989) and Robert E. Brown, agree that different styles of handshaking convey different strategies. The "Lets Get Together Grip" handshake (Lewis, 1989, p. 125), or what Brown refers to as "The All-American" (see Figure Example 3.6), is used most by corporate executives and leaders. The firmness of the handshake demonstrates a willingness to communicate. Both parties apply equal pressure. "This handshake expresses a feeling of relaxed self-confidence. The person using it will be open, trustworthy and willing to listen. The person

can be could be trusted in a highly classified position.” (Brown). This grip can be identified when both hands are held to each other with the thumbs pointing upward, while the fingers cup the opposing party’s palm.

(Figure Example 3.6)



(Robert E. Brown, <http://rebrown.com/rebgrown/handsh.htm>)

Lewis (1989) notes that an increase of pressure or duration of either party conveys a desire to have a majority rule. If the opposing party counteracts with the same elements, the wish to dominate by the initiator, will not be easy. If the opposing party tolerates the increase of strength and duration, without counteraction, the party will submit to the demands of the initiator. If a party abruptly pulls away from the increased aggression of the handshake, the opposing party is more likely to resist the opponent’s demands (p. 125).

Brown refers to “The Topper” handshake, or the “Great Man Grip” (see Figure Example 3.7), as it is referred to by Lewis (1989, p. 124), as dominating in nature. The party who wishes to dominate will extend and grasp the opposing party with their palm facing downward. This handshake communicates to the opposing party that they are in charge of the engagement. Lewis (1989) noted, “In a study of successful senior managers, the majority were found to use this dominating handgrip” (p. 124).

The reader should be aware that not all cultures practice the same handshaking techniques. In Islamic cultures, men should never offer to shake hands with women because touching



between unrelated men and women is forbidden. Some Middle Eastern and Asian cultures prefer a gentle handshake rather than a style similar to executive style handgrip. Some Asian cultures also discourage direct eye contact during handshaking

([http://www.acq.osd.mil/dp/cpf/pgv1\\_0/pgv5/pgv5c5.html](http://www.acq.osd.mil/dp/cpf/pgv1_0/pgv5/pgv5c5.html)).

(Figure Example 3.7)



(Robert E. Brown, <http://rebrown.com/rebgrown/handsh.htm>)

The party that receives the dominating handshake can retain equality without maneuvering the hands. Brown and Lewis (1989, p.188), suggest the person receiving the dominating handshake can take one step towards the person using the dominating handshake, with the left foot. Next, the person can move their right leg next to the other person's left side, followed by bringing the left leg over, invading the other person's private space and completing the counteraction to the dominating hand shake.

The opposite of the "Great Man Grip" handshake is referred to by Lewis (1989) as the "Give in Grip" handshake. When a handshake is about to take place, one person extends their hand with their palm facing downward. It is a signal to a potential client or employer that the person is willing to act upon his or her orders. To convey a position of strength using this handgrip, one should use a firmer grip until the opposing party increases their strength, then the person should relax tension from their hand (p. 125)

The "Dead Fish" (Brown), is a moist, clammy indifferent type of handshake (see Figure Example 3.8). If a job candidate offers this style of handshake, their personality tends to be passive or apathetic. These individuals tend to be better with people, information and machinery. They may have good technical skills, but lack people skills.

(Figure Example 3.8)



(Robert E. Brown, <http://rebrown.com/rebgrown/handsh.htm>)

There are several variances to the handshakes that have been described in this study. As mentioned previously, several factors, such as gender, culture and even medical history can affect the style of someone's handshake. A person may wish to convey a position of dominance during a handshake, but may lack the strength in the hand or wrist as the result of arthritic or other orthopedic conditions.

### Buying Signs in Negotiations

Negotiators can observe through non-verbal communication signals when a client is considering agreeing to a deal. Certain "buy" signals transmitted by the buyer include:

- Relaxation: Sudden relaxation after signs of tension and anxiety such as agitated feet and fidgeting hands become still.
- Chin Touch: Observed by sales-trainer Goerges Patounas (Lewis, 1989, p 223), is a potent buy sign. Sales people should try to seal the deal.

- **Close Proximity:** Those considering buying lean closer to the seller when sitting, or stand closer while standing.
- **Increased Eye Contact:** When the buying decision is made, opposite parties tend to increase eye contact (Lewis, 1989, p. 223).

The following table identifies other positive and negative non-verbal communication signs and appropriate actions to follow once the non-verbal cue is identified (Gabriel, 2002):

Positive	Negative
Rising from chair and pacing; Allow buyer to analyze documentation. Do not interrupt buyer.	Tightly pressed lips; Biting of the bottom lip; Hand covering facial areas such as the ear or mouth. Confront buyer with concerns.
Picking up and reading brochures; Do not interrupt buyer; Buyer is interested.	Brochures or other documentation thrown aside by buyer with displeasure.
Unbuttoning of jacket, loosening of tie, open hands and leaning towards seller.	Buttoning, tightening or closing of jacket, coat or tie; Fiddling with keys and looking at the door.
Warm smile; Relaxed posture. Buyer may agree to the sale.	Posture positioned sideways; Leaning back with crossed arms; Shoulder pointed toward seller; Buyer wants to terminate negotiation.
Searching for paper and pen to write figures; Do not interrupt buyer; Sale is possibility; Questions may arise from calculations.	Buyer pushes items on a desk towards seller; Barrier created between buyer and seller. Buyer wants to end negotiation.

Salespeople should be alert to conflicting signals communicated from the buyer. Conflicting signals could be understood as confusion, deception or uncertainty from the seller's perspective.

The salesperson should identify the concerns of the buyer, satisfy the concern, and ask for their business.

### Current Research in Appropriate Dress Codes and Appearance

It is a natural response for people to judge others by the way they dress. Displaying improper dress codes at an interview or negotiation can jeopardize communication between parties. It is crucial for those who will partake in these activities to research the dress codes of the organization they will encounter.

In a typical corporate environment, men and women alike need to understand the silent rules of attire and appearance. Attire is an extremely important when attempting to create a positive first impression. Plotkin states "initial decisions made about a candidate within the first three minutes of an interview are nearly irreversible.

According to Medley (1993), people should consider three factors when dressing for an interview:

1. Suit the interviewer.
2. Suit the position applying for.
3. Suit to the candidate's advantage. (p. 133).

Jolly Mansfield-Young (as cited by Medley, 1993, pp. 134-135) of Tandem Computers suggests that candidates should never appear in an "overly packaged "dress-for-success" look. Candidates want to portray an image of ease and control. Those who fidget with shoes, cuffs or buttons will give the interviewer a perception that the interviewee is uncomfortable. Supporting Mansfield Young's evaluations, research conducted by Robert A. Baron (as cited by Bell, 1989, p. 66), Ph. D, of Georgetown University, in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, in 1987, concluded that job candidates success rate actually decreased with an "overabundance of nonverbal cues-including perfume, expensive clothing, jewelry, overt posture and facial gestures.

The best strategy for job applicants to follow appears to be one of careful moderation". Bell (1989) also advises that the appearance of a less tailored-dressed candidate should not always be a sign of carelessness or lack of effort. "Economic realities of college and job changes leave many job candidates financially stressed" (p. 66).

Interviewing dress codes differ for men and women for obvious reasons. Although dress codes differ from industry to industry, the following information can assist the interviewee to identify dress codes that assist individuals to create a favorable first impression:

#### Women:

Dress – Simple tailored suit; simple blouse; dress and jacket combination; tailored dress.

- Color– Blue, gray, beige, black.
- Makeup – Sparingly used.
- Shoes – Closed toe; Low-heeled pumps; flesh colored stockings.
- Jewelry – Minimal (Plotkin).

#### Men

- Dress – Tailored Suit.
- Color– Navy, gray, beige; dark suite with white shirt.
- Shoes – Business shoes with over- the-calf black socks.
- Tie – Matching silk; low key colors (Plotkin).

Both men and women must also employ the following personal appearance practices along with a positive dress code (Medley, 1993, p. 139) and (Plotkin):

- Trimmed and clean fingernails – Dirty fingernails portray revulsion to the interviewer.
- Fresh Breath – Food or liquor can leave a negative impression.

- Neat hair– Candidates should consider checking hair in a restroom mirror.
- Pressed clothes and polished shoes – Scuffed shoes create a high rejection percentage (Jeri Long, as cited by Medley, 1993, p. 139)
- Cleanliness – Foul body scent is a turnoff for interviewers.
- Perfumes or Colognes – Too much could cause allergic reactions to some people.
- Winter coats – Cleaned and pressed. These may be the first article of clothing noticed by an interviewer.
- Umbrella – Conservative colors – black, tan, navy, gray.
- Briefcase or purse – Cleaned and polished. Contents organized.

Interviewers and interviewees alike must realize that attire alone of a candidate will not fully contribute to a successful encounter. Like all non-verbal communication signals, the area of positive appearance must be interpreted with other non-verbal signals as well as the candidate's experience, skills and most importantly, interest in the opportunity.

Dr. Michael Solomon, of the University of North Carolina, conducted a study, in which he held mock corporate interviews with students. Dr. Solomon carefully chose his subjects in that some would arrive at the interview directly from class, and the others would have time to change into formal dress. He discovered that those who were more formally dressed believed the interviewer, Dr. Solomon, had more confidence in their ability than those candidates who were more casually dressed. Those who were dressed more formally also negotiated a starting salary of over \$3,900 more than those who were casually dressed (Lewis, 1989, p. 234). Lewis also states that women should not dress that sexily during an interview. According to psychologist Thomas Cash (as cited by Lewis, 1989, p. 234), "A sexy looking woman is definitely going to get a longer interview, but she won't get the job".

### The Impact of Facial Gestures in Interviewing and Negotiating Success

It is the author's belief that when most people are communicating nonverbally, the area that is most noticed is the facial areas. The faces of people portray a vast number of conscious and unconscious, or automatic expressions. Feelings of confidence, stress, uncertainty and joy can be determined by observing the movement of facial features. Calero and Nierenberg (1993) suggest that a business negotiation presents situations of widely used facial expressions. Hostile individuals will look at others with wide-open eyes, tightly sealed lips with the corner of the eyebrows pointing downward. They sometimes will speak with through clenched teeth and a furrowed forehead. Others will approach a negotiation with impeccable manners such as droopy eyelids, slight smile, unfurrowed forehead and peacefully arched eyebrows (pp.18-19). These individuals will be very capable and believes in cooperation.

- The head tilt to one side indicates the candidate is interested.
- Lip biting is an indication of stress.
- Raised eyebrows are an indication of surprise or disbelief.
- Avoidance of eye contact portrays fear, insincerity, avoidance or a lack of interest.
- Lowered chin indicates defensiveness or insecurity.
- Narrowing eye focus indicates resentment, anger disapproval or disagreement.
- Steady eye stare indicates a need for control, or a plain weirdness.

### Deciphering Deception

Psychologist Gerald Jellison of the University of South Carolina has determined that people are lied to about two hundred times a day or once every five minutes. People deceive, as do animals in nature, to protect themselves or to get something they cannot get by other means. (Geary, 2000). Deception is a common play used in business interviews and negotiations as

well. Individuals will often use deception to coerce opposing parties into accepting sales offers and by interviewees to falsify background information and achievements. Several movements of the hands and facial gestures that portray deception can be somewhat easy to detect. Individuals who perform the following movements may qualify as deceivers (Lewis, 1989, p. 227):

The Collar Pull: The collar pull is performed when individuals suffer from increased tension in the neck area, stimulating nerves. The tug on the collar messages the tingling sensation bringing relief to the individual.

The Neck Scratch: Performed when the speaker's words do not match their feelings. The neck is scratched exactly five times, rarely less or more.

Increased Face Touching: A subconscious move performed by an individual. Increased touch to chin, neck and ear areas. Performed by the speaker to block their deception. Reflects a conflict between the speaker's portrayal of an honest person and the actual deception.

a. The Nose Touch: Birdwhistell (as cited by Calero and Nierenberg, 1993, p. 64) has determined the nose touch in Americans is a sure sign of "No" or doubt. Lewis (1989) states that perhaps the move is made when an individual attempts to cover the mouth, but a possible fear the deception may be discovered, the hand moves towards a movement of a slight nose rub (p. 228)

b. The Eye Touch: Performed when there is a desire to avoid looking at the person being deceived. Men will rub eye vigorously then look away at the floor, while women will gently rub the area under the eye before glancing upward. Deceptive eye movements also include:

Evasive – Eyes that look away for extended period of time.

Shifting – Eyes that quickly glance away then look back at the opposing party.

Fluttering – Eyelids flutter while eye contact is given.

Stammering – Similar to eye fluttering, but the eyelids remain closed for sometimes several seconds.



Psychologist Peter Ekman, of the University of California San Francisco, has conducted research in the area of deception for fifteen years. Ekman (as cited by Geary, 2000) has determined that the smile is one of the easiest expressions to fake. Ekman notes that when someone produces a genuine smile, the corners of the lips are affected, the inner corners of the eyebrows are lowered and the muscle around the eye produce wrinkling, or "crow's feet". A forced smile lacks the lowering of the eyebrows, causing the smile to look strained and stiff

One should take into account that there will be savvy negotiators, interviewers and interviewees who can consciously control their non-verbal signals in attempt to coerce opposing parties to buy into a deal or job offer. One should note that some people would rub their nose because it itches. However, it is most often distinctively different than the deceptive nose rub. The deceptive nose rub is usually followed by other non-verbal cues of stress or deception such as the individual, "Squirming in a chair, twisting the body into a silhouette position, or physically withdrawing" (Calero and Nierenberg, 1993, p. 67). Knowing how to spot a deceiver is as important as knowing how to deliver a lie. One who can spot deception is less likely to be swindled into suspicious business deals or hire candidates with questionable backgrounds and achievements.

## Chapter IV

### SURVEY OF CORPORATE INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN THE INTERVIEWING AND NEGOTIATING PROCESS

#### Survey Background

The survey was presented to individuals in corporate environments who have or are currently in positions where they have engaged in the negotiating and job interviewing processes. The author targeted individuals at his current and past places of employment and other associates in corporate environments to determine if current research supports responses by those surveyed.

Commonly used non-verbal communication in these situations were presented in ten questions with five multiple choice answers for each question – strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

The survey was distributed to the audience by way of hard copy desk drop, e-mail and fax and was completed and returned by similar means.

#### Calculating the Data

A total of twenty-eight people completed and returned the survey. To calculate the percentage of answers responded to each question, the author simply developed a tally sheet and marked which answer was selected for each question on each survey. The total was compared to research that was conducted from other published sources.

#### Survey Questions and Analyses

**Statement #1. I am fully aware of non-verbal communication during business encounters.**

For question #1, 53% of those surveyed strongly agreed, 43% agreed, 3% remained neutral, while no one disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Judging from the responses to this question, almost all individuals who were surveyed have a definite level of awareness of non-verbal communication during these business encounters and can attest that it is critical to successful communication in interviews and negotiations.

**Statement #2.** The amount of personal space given to you by a client or interviewee can contribute to successful rapport. Forty- three percent strongly agreed, 39% agreed, 14% remained neutral, 5% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed.

The question was overwhelmingly answered to be a positive factor for successful rapport in an interview or negotiation. Edward T. Hall coined the word, proxemics, in his 1959 book *The Silent Language*, which focused on human spatial relationships (Givens, 1999-2000). In his book, Hall (1959) states that social/consultative space is generally four to ten feet of space. It is the author's conclusion from observance that most interviews and negotiations occur between parties, fall within this approximation.

**Statement #3.** Eye contact is the most important non-verbal cue during an interview. Forty- three percent strongly agreed, 39% agreed, 14% remained neutral, no one disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed.

A far majority of those surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that eye contact is the most import non-verbal communication cue during an interview or negotiation. As discussed in chapter three, Lewis (1989) states that frequent eye contact from a potential employer means a strong possibility of a job offer, and when gaze is delivered and accompanied with frequent smiling and head movements, the job offer is almost guaranteed.

**Statement #4.** The strength of a handshake can be crucial to a successful business engagement. Twenty- one percent strongly agreed, 39% percent agreed, 25% remained neutral,

14% disagreed, while no one strongly disagreed.

This question was asked because many people have different reactions towards the styles of handshakes. Many people may perceive a strong handshake as positive and confident sign. Others may interpret this handshake as dominating and intimidating. According to Lewis (1989) and Brown, the most successful hand-shake is one with firm pressure which signals a willingness to communicate.

**Statement #5. The style and fashion of a candidate's attire can affect the outcome of a business encounter.** Forty- three percent strongly agreed, 46% agreed, 3% remained neutral, 7% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed. Common knowledge suggests that people are judged by the way they dress. Negotiations and interviews are situations where dress code plays an extremely important role in determining successful or unsuccessful business engagements. Individuals should consider researching the dress code of the organization that they will conduct business with before the encounter. Negotiations and interviews have failed simply because individuals did not present themselves with the appropriate attire.

**Statement #6. Facial gestures can affect the outcome of a business encounter.** Twenty-five percent strongly agreed, 75% percent agreed, while no one answered neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. Those surveyed had no doubt facial gestures can affect the outcome of a negotiation or interview. Facial gestures, which include eye contact and movements, smiling and movements of the eyebrows and forehead, do have a profound effect on those surveyed.

**Statement #7. Proper posture can improve a candidate's chance for a successful interview.** Twenty-eight percent strongly agreed, 46% percent agreed, 14% answered neutral, 3% disagreed while no one strongly disagreed. The response overwhelmingly supports research that

interviewees, negotiators and people in general, who approach situations with a straight, upright posture, help portray an image of a confident and important person.

**Statement #8.** A candidate can enhance their performance at a job interview by using hand gestures. Seven percent strongly agreed, 28% agreed, 32% answered neutral, 32% percent disagreed while only 1% strongly disagreed. Responses to this fell into the middle answers, while a very low number found that hand gestures were neither very useful nor very distracting. It could be interpreted that this particular form of non-verbal communication either benefits or disrupts people on an individual basis.

**Statement #9.** It is easy to give a good second impression after a bad first impression. None of the individuals surveyed answered either strongly agree or agree, while 3% remained neutral, 46% disagreed and 50% strongly disagreed. Those surveyed are in strong agreement that a good first impression is a must when interviewing a job candidate or engaging in a negotiation. According to Lewis (1989), some experts have determined that enduring evaluations are made within 120 seconds of the encounter (p. 32). Research conducted by Dr. Ray Forbes of the University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology (UWIST) and Paul Jackson of Sheffield University shows the most successful job candidates are the ones who are most skilled in Impression Management. "Removing a dismal first impression could prove a long, hard and perhaps futile struggle" (Lewis, 1989, pp. 33-34).

**Statement #10.** Non-verbal communication is more important than verbal communication during an interview or negotiation. Four percent strongly agreed, 4% agreed, 32% remained neutral, 54% percent disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed. The purposes for the responses for

this question were observed in the comments section of the survey. A Marketing Director of Consumer Services Sales and Marketing in the telecommunications industry quoted, "Non-verbal communication provides a supplemental set of data/opinions to the verbal... It's not one or the other... From my perspective, they are linked". An Executive Vice President in Pharmaceutical Medical Education also stated,. "Posture, gestures, eye-contact can all add impact to what someone is trying to convey verbally and can be the deciding factor in hiring someone for a position. It's not just what someone says but how they say it!"

### Survey Analyses

Men and women from different companies and industries participated in the survey. Judging from the responses, it can be said that most of those who participated in the survey, for the most part, generally agreed with one another, with an overwhelming agreement with questions one, six and nine. A small number of those surveyed included comments. The comments reflected attitudes that related to question ten, the importance of non-verbal communication. Most agreed that non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication and that both are used to create an overall impression of the individual during an interview of negotiation.

## Chapter V

### SUMMARY

This study was designed to bring awareness to those individuals who are currently, or will be involved in the interviewing process. The author has learned a great deal himself about non-verbal communication, and how it can be used to one's advantage in business and life situations, as well.

Individuals who are entering the job market for the first time, or who are returning from an extended period of time away from the workforce, can use the information provided by researchers to improve their performance at job interviews, which will help increase their chances of landing a job. Those who are currently in positions of interviewing candidates can use this research as a tool that will assist them in determining which candidates create the best impression for their company. Interviewers can also use this study to correct, or enhance non-verbal weaknesses they have subconsciously used that have turned off potential strong candidates.

Negotiators can use this study to discover what non-verbal tactics they can employ to help close sales deals, or determine if opposing parties are considering or refusing offers.

However, research also points out there are several cautions to be aware of when interpreting non-verbal communication. Factors such as gender, culture, health, religion, age and education, all have an effect on non-verbal communication. When conducting business in other cultures, one must understand the culture along with the non-verbal communication customs of the host culture to avoid possible offensive and embarrassing confrontations. Some individuals in the interview and negotiation process will have knowledge of non-verbal communication, and will use this knowledge to their advantage. They will read stress and anxiety of job candidates. They will be able to spot a liar as well as having the capability of consciously controlling their

own non-verbal give-aways.

### Recommendations

Formal education places so much more emphasis on written and verbal communication than it does on non-verbal communication. This author was never introduced to this form of communication up until graduate school, where it was referred to sporadically. It is ironic that this form of communication that is used most often by humans and animals alike has never been a subject of attention in most educational and corporate institutions, although some attention to it has been brought given.

How much more could people succeed in these business situations if they could read and interpret the non-verbal communication cues of others, as well as deliver effective non-verbal signals themselves? This study was developed to introduce several non-verbal communication signals used in the interviewing and negotiating experience, and how one can use this research for their advantage. This author has discovered that several of the authors have cited each other to support their own conclusions. The reader should also view the works cited to learn more about non-verbal communication practices they could use in other aspects of their lives, as well as in business. Corporations and educational institutions should take advantage of current research to develop training programs in non-verbal communication for their employees. Applying the techniques outlined in this study can help the reader build self-confidence and self-esteem as they strive for success in the business world, as well as in life.



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## Survey



### Non-verbal Communication Survey

How important is non-verbal communication in your hiring and negotiating activities?

This survey is being conducted for my Master's Thesis project in non-verbal communication at Seton Hall University. Based on your experience, please choose only one answer for each question. Your answers will be kept confidential. Please notify me if you would like to see the final results of the questionnaire. Return your questionnaire by July 31, 2002 to:

Dave Gustafson  
Avaya Inc.  
Room 1C409  
211 Mt. Airy Road  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920  
908-853-6196

You may also fax me your completed survey at 908-953-7752, or send your questionnaire via e-mail to [davegus@avaya.com](mailto:davegus@avaya.com).

**Part I**

Your Industry \_\_\_\_\_

Your Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Your Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II**

Based on your experience, how do you rate the following ten questions?

(SA) Strongly Agree (A) Agree (N) Neutral (D) Disagree (SD) Strongly Disagree

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. I am fully aware of non-verbal communication during business encounters.                                   | SA A N D SD |
| 2. The amount of personal space given to you by a client or interviewee can contribute to successful rapport. | SA A N D SD |
| 3. Eye contact is the most important non-verbal cue during a job interview.                                   | SA A N D SD |
| 4. The strength of a handshake can be crucial to a successful business engagement.                            | SA A N D SD |
| 5. The style and fashion of a candidate's attire can affect the outcome of business encounter.                | SA A N D SD |
| 6. Facial gestures can affect the outcome of a business encounter.  | SA A N D SD |
| 7. Proper posture can improve a candidate's chance for a successful interview.                                | SA A N D SD |
| 8. A candidate can enhance their performance at a job interview by using hand gestures.                       | SA A N D SD |
| 9. It is easy to give a good second impression after a bad first impression.                                  | SA A N D SD |
| 10. Non-verbal communication is more important than verbal communication during an interview or negotiation.  | SA A N D SD |

Please include any additional comments. \_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you for your participation.